



Excellence in Recovery Housing Act

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Problem

Over 20 million Americans identify as being in recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD).ⁱ For many individuals, recovery housing or “sober homes” is a critical component of their recovery. Recovery residences provide a family-like communal living experience in which individuals agree to abstain from substance use (aside from prescribed medications) and provide each other support. Recovery residences vary in how they are managed, from peer-run to licensed facilities with staff and clinical services, but they share the goal of providing a safe and stable environment for individuals who often face challenges finding other housing due to a lack of steady income or involvement with the criminal justice system.

Individuals with a SUD who live in recovery housing are more likely to maintain recovery, have higher rates of employment, and are less likely to become incarcerated.ⁱⁱ While a comprehensive study has not been conducted to determine the exact amount of recovery housing available and the demand,ⁱⁱⁱ smaller studies and anecdotal reports indicate that there are not currently enough beds in recovery housing for everyone who wants one.^{iv} Additionally, not all states regulate recovery housing or require accreditation, and the quality varies.

Solution

Pass the *Excellence in Recovery Housing Act*, which would improve understanding of the availability and need for recovery housing, coordinate the government's efforts, and promote the adoption of best practices for operating recovery housing. The SUPPORT Act required SAMHSA to publish best practices for operating recovery housing,^v but these are not focused on practical operations. Recovery residences, particularly those that are peer-run instead of staff-led, would benefit from standardized recommendations to ensure that the housing is high-quality and meets residents' needs.

What does the *Excellence in Recovery Housing Act* do?

This legislation would require SAMHSA, along with national accrediting entities and reputable providers of recovery housing services, to develop guidelines for states to promote the availability of high-quality recovery housing. It would also provide grants to states to implement these guidelines and promote high-quality housing. In order to better understand the current availability of high-quality recovery housing, the bill would require the National Academy of Sciences to study the issue, as well as make recommendations for increasing availability, improving data collection, improving inclusivity for individuals who take medication-assisted treatment, and report on state or local allegations or legal actions regarding the opening and operation of recovery housing. Finally, it would create an interagency working group, chaired by SAMHSA and HUD, to increase collaboration among federal agencies in promoting the availability of high-quality recovery housing.



Support for the Excellence in Recovery Housing Act

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness, Behavioral Health Association of Providers, California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals, Faces & Voices of Recovery, Live4Lali, National Alliance for Medication Assisted Recovery (NAMA Recovery), National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR), National Council for Behavioral Health, Partnership to End Addiction, SMART Recovery, The Kennedy Forum, Treatment Communities of America, Well Being Trust

ⁱ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018.pdf>

ⁱⁱ https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Recovery-Housing-Issue-Brief_May-2017.pdf?dof=375ateTbd56

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/690831.pdf>

^{iv} https://www.interactforhealth.org/upl/media/recovery_housing_in_greater_cincinnati.pdf

^v <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/housing-best-practices-100819.pdf>